



**Ron C. Cross**

## IMPACT FEES AND CIP'S

*By Ron C. Cross*  
*Board of Commission Chairman*

Few things in government are completed on time, but the Impact Fee Committee met the schedule set by the Commission and delivered the results of their study on March 31, 2006. The surprising recommendation in the report's executive summary, at least to me, is very simply stated by Jeff Browning, Director of Planning and Zoning:

"The Impact Fee Committee does not recommend that Columbia County proceed at this time with enacting impact fees on new growth and development."

The Committee, composed of five people from the building/development industry, as required by law, and five citizens at large, reached the following conclusions:

1. With few exceptions, Columbia County has successfully met its obligation to provide adequate infrastructure within a rapidly growing county. The areas where there may be a shortfall requiring additional funding are stormwater management and transportation.
2. Many of the inadequacies in the County's stormwater and transportation infrastructure are existing deficiencies and cannot be funded through impact fees.

In the first conclusion, the Committee acknowledges the efforts of our Water and Sewer Utility in keeping ahead of the growth pattern and confirms our policy of requiring developers to furnish all needed infrastructure for their developments. Developers must pay for all roads, water and sewer lines, stormwater systems, etc., and maintain them for a year prior to deeding them to the County. This is, in fact, an impact fee already in place.

In the full report, the Committee lists other reasons for their decision and details the problems and complexities of impact fees because for the laws governing the collection of such fees. Mr. Darren Hicks, an attorney who has worked with impact fees in the State of Georgia, provided excellent insight into the typical functioning of impact fees in various counties and the problems experienced in implementation. Time and location restrictions on improvements and burdensome accounting requirements were also mentioned as instrumental in the recommendation. A copy of the report can be obtained from the Commission Office. The County Commission will review the entire study and citizen committee recommendation and will make their decision on the implementation of impact fees in the near future.

The first of three meetings on our proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was held April 13th with the citizen input verifying the findings of the Impact Fee Committee. The number one need expressed by the attending residents was for stormwater improvements in areas constructed prior to the enactment of stormwater regulations - mainly the need for a stormwater master plan and improvements in the Reed Creek drainage basin and Bowen's Pond. Transportation needs were second with new sidewalks being the first priority and several road improvements close behind. The handouts from the CIP meeting, a citizen survey, and the current tally of the surveys are on the County's website ([www.columbiacountyga.gov](http://www.columbiacountyga.gov)). The full results will be published after the next two meetings - one at Eubanks Blanchard Community Center on May 11th and the last one on June 8th at the Government Center auditorium. All of those attending the first meeting verified that they would support the referendum for these improvements. Please attend one or both of the future meetings and let us know your feelings.



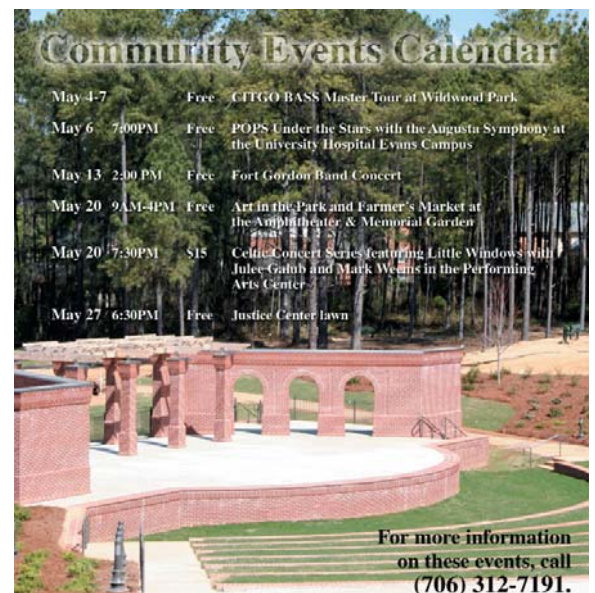
## CVB is on "Go"



**Beda Johnson**

Beda Johnson, Executive Director of Columbia County's new Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), has begun promoting Columbia County as an attractive destination for recreational opportunities, special events, regional meetings, and family reunions. By aggressively marketing the County's valued natural resources and facilities, Beda will ensure that tourism creates a positive economic impact which enhances the quality of life for us all.

Columbia County will be the site for several national bass tournaments at Wildwood Park in 2006. These tournaments provide a significant increase in not just hotel occupancy throughout the region, but also a boost to restaurants, local bait and tackle outlets, gas stations, and even drug stores (for those last minute sunscreen purchases). Columbia County is happy to work with the Greater Augusta Sports Council, the Clarks Hill Partnership of Georgia, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and other local entities to facilitate hundreds of visitors to our region each year for these premier outdoor events.



**Community Events Calendar**

May 4-7	Free	CITGO BASS Master Tour at Wildwood Park
May 6 7:00PM	Free	POPS Under the Stars with the Augusta Symphony at the University Hospital Evans Campus
May 13 2:00 PM	Free	Fort Gordon Band Concert
May 20 9AM-4PM	Free	Art in the Park and Farmer's Market at the Amphitheater & Memorial Garden
May 20 7:30PM	\$15	Celtic Concert Series featuring Little Windows with Julie Galub and Mark Weems in the Performing Arts Center
May 27 6:30PM	Free	Justice Center lawn

**For more information on these events, call (706) 312-7191.**



## Its Getting To Be That Time of Year

*By Emergency Services Director Pam Tucker*

The Columbia County Health Department expects mosquitoes to be in abundance this year. The best way to control mosquitoes is to prevent them from breeding or to eliminate them before they become adults (called "larviciding"). Almost anything that will hold water for one week can produce these pests. There may be several places around your home causing mosquito problems. These are a few suggestions to help you eliminate standing water around your house:

### **Pam Tucker**

- Store wheelbarrows, buckets, barrels, and boats upside down so that water cannot accumulate in them. Large boats may be covered or stored under a covered area to prevent accumulation of water.
- Change water in birdbaths, small wading pools, and pet dishes at least once a week.
- Aerate ornamental ponds or stock them with fish.
- Properly chlorinate backyard swimming pools. Cover any pool that is not in use and be sure the cover does not hold pockets of water.

Homeowners can have a significant effect on the local mosquito populations if they reduce mosquito-breeding areas on their property. If some areas of standing water still exist, you might consider using a larvicide product that can be purchased at most local home improvement stores. Columbia County does not have a mosquito-spraying program. Our role as public health officials is to educate and empower individuals to take responsibility for their own environment through prevention and control.

In addition to trying to control the mosquito population you can also protect your self when outdoors by wearing an insect repellent. When choosing a repellent keep these things in mind: for children use products that contain 10% or less DEET, for adults use products that contain no more than 30% DEET, DO NOT use DEET on infants or pregnant women. Remember to wash treated skin once exposure to mosquitoes has ended.

## Good News for Wildwood Park Campers

The County is in the process of reworking and upgrading utilities at the Wildwood Park campsites. All 16 sites in Area #2 are complete with new water lines and faucets, panel boxes, camper hook ups, and wiring. Work in camping area #1 began the third week of March but should not impact campers, as only a few sites will be closed at a time until the project is complete.



## No Burning Ban



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The Forestry Service has issued a complete and total ban on open burning which is in effect for Columbia County annually from May 1st through September 30th. No open burning is allowed during this time!

## "I Can't Find You"

"I can't find you" is not a good statement if you are a business wanting customers or a citizen needing emergency personnel on a dark night. Having street numbers clearly displayed is essential!

The 9-1-1 emergency response system fee that is charged on both land lines and cell phones has funded the necessary technology to determine the precise originating location of a call. This has greatly improved emergency response time, but properly displayed home/business numbers can make the location determination easier and allows emergency personnel to proceed quicker.

It only makes sense to display the street numbers on your house (3" high) or business (4" high), but take it one step further to insure they are legible from the street. See if your address passes the following test:

- Can your address number be seen from the road? In darkness or bad weather?
- Are any numbers covered by shrubs or trees? Do they stand out from the background?
- In a complex with multiple buildings: Is each building clearly marked? Apartment number? Trailer? Lot number?
- If your address is on your mailbox (both sides), can it be seen both day and night? Is the mailbox in front of the correct house or apartment?

The Martinez-Columbia Fire Rescue is assisting citizens who live in rural areas and need a visible street number by making the address signs for \$20 to cover materials. Citizens who would like to order a street number sign should contact Della at (706) 863-7745.

Make your family and customers happy – make those address numbers large and legible. It is much better to be safe than sorry! Section 505.1 of the International Fire Code stipulates that "New and existing buildings shall have approved address numbers... placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property." For questions or concerns, please call the GIS Department at 706-8680-3421.